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MY LORD IN LIVERY

A FARCE IN ONE ACT

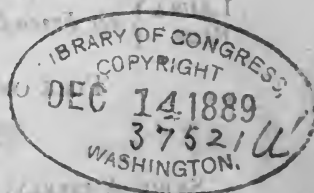
BY
S. THEYRE SMITH

NEW AMERICAN EDITION, CORRECTLY REPRINTED FROM THE ORIGINAL AUTHORIZED ACTING EDITION, WITH THE ORIGINAL CASTS OF THE CHARACTERS, SYNOPSIS OF INCIDENTS, TIME OF REPRESENTATION, DESCRIPTION OF THE COSTUMES, SCENE AND PROPERTY PLOTS, DIAGRAM OF THE STAGE SETTING, SIDES OF ENTRANCE AND EXIT, RELATIVE POSITIONS OF THE PERFORMERS, EXPLANATION OF THE STAGE DIRECTIONS, ETC., AND ALL OF THE STAGE BUSINESS.

"And give to dust that is a little gilt,
More laud than gilt o'erdusted."

—*Troilus and Cressida*, III, 3.

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MY LORD IN LIVERY.

CAST OF CHARACTERS.

	<i>Princess's Theatre, London, Oct. 9th, 1886.</i>	<i>Daly's Theatre, New York, May 9th, 1889.</i>
LORD THIRLMERE, (<i>H. M. S. Phleg- thon</i>)	Mr. Wilfred Drayton.	Mr. Courtenay Thorpe.
SPIGGOTT, (<i>an old family Butler</i>)	Mr. Stewart Dawson.	Mr. Felix Morris.
HOPKINS, (<i>a Footman</i>)	Mr. H. Charles.	Mr. Ferdinand Gottschalk.
ROBERT, (<i>the small- est Page procur- able</i>)	Master Cooper.	Mr. Tommy Yore.
SYBIL AMBERLY, (<i>Daughter of Sir George Amberly</i>)	Miss Edith Chester.	Miss Rosina Vokes.
LAURA } <i>her Friends</i>	Miss Grace Arnold.	Miss Helen Standish.
ROSE }	Miss Fanny Calhæm.	Miss Helen Dacre.

TIME OF REPRESENTATION—FIFTY MINUTES.

SYNOPSIS OF INCIDENTS.

SYBIL AMBERLY, a young lady in the country house of her father, a baronet who is absent, receives on the same morning two letters. One, an anonymous note, informs her that a young nobleman is about to enter the mansion in the disguise of a footman, while the other, from her lover, in the navy, says a titled shipmate has wagered that he will procure a ring from her finger before he has been half an hour in her company. Putting these circumstances together, SYBIL and two young visitors of her own sex resolve to teach the lover's friend a lesson; and to do this, they impersonate the female inmates of the servants' hall. After flirting with the new footman, they are horrified by the old butler's dis-

covery that the young man from London is really the new servant he has been expecting, and not an aristocratic masquerader. While they have gone to resume their usual dresses, the madcap young nobleman arrives, bribes the genuine footman and assumes a livery. By this time the ladies and the butler are thoroughly frightened by the reports of some burglaries in the neighborhood, and become convinced that both the newcomers are robbers in disguise, with designs upon the family plate. The "lord in livery" discovering the mistake that has been made, takes advantage of it to gain the coveted ring, but immediately returns it, trusting to its owner's generosity to forgive the audacity of a sincerely penitent "LORD IN LIVERY."

COSTUMES.

SYBIL, ROSE and LAURA.—*First dress*, ladies' morning dress. *Second dress*, servants' print dresses, caps and aprons. *Third dress*, same as the first.

THIRLMERE.—*First dress*, gentleman's morning suit with light overcoat. *Second dress*, full suit of livery.

HOPKINS.—*First dress*, second-hand sort of dress; servant in mufti suit. *Second dress*, full suit of livery.

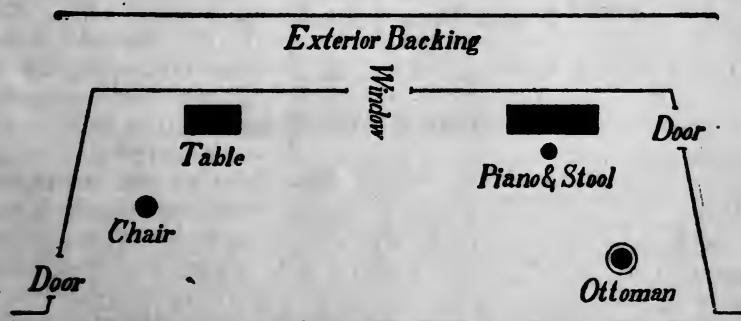
SPIGGOTT.—Evening black with ample white waistcoat.

ROBERT.—A page's native buttons.

PROPERTIES.

Letters for SYBIL and ROBERT. Small carpet-bag for HOPKINS. Wine, in decanter, and glass on tray for SPIGGOTT. Tea-service, etc., on tray for THIRLMERE. Cake, dishes, etc., for SPIGGOTT. Watches, chains and rings for ROSE, LAURA and SYBIL. Bell on table. Furniture as per scene-plot.

STAGE SETTING AND SCENE PLOT.



SCENE.—Fancy chamber set in 3 G., backed with exterior drop in 4 G.

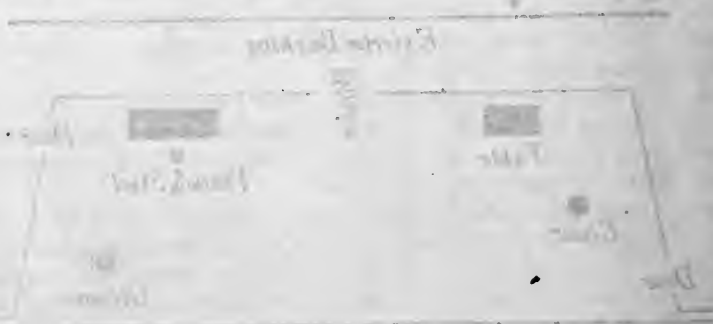
French window, with curtains, C. Doors R. 1 E. and L. 3 E. Table against flat, R. Piano and stool against flat, L. Low chair R. Ottoman down L. Pictures and ornaments *ad lib.* Carpet down.

STAGE DIRECTIONS.

The player is supposed to face the audience. R., means right; L., left; C., centre; R. C., right of centre; L. C., left of centre; D. F., door in the flat or scene running across the back of the stage; R. F., right side of the flat; L. F., left side of the flat; R. D., right door; L. D., left door; 1 E., first entrance; 2 E., second entrance; U. E., upper entrance; 1, 2 or 3 G., first, second or third grooves; UP STAGE, toward the back; DOWN STAGE, toward the footlights.

R. R. C. C. L. C. L.

NOTE.—The text of this play is correctly reprinted from the original authorized acting edition, without change. The introductory matter has been carefully prepared by an expert, and is the only part of this book protected by copyright.





MY LORD IN LIVERY.

Scene.—*A large sitting-room. French window in flat. Doors R. front and L. back; table against wall, R.; afternoon tea table; ottoman, L., low chair, R.; piano against L. wall. SYBIL leaning against table, a letter in her hand. ROSE on chair. LAURA on ottoman.*

Syb. Did you ever hear of anything so audacious? (*glancing at letter*) Instead of our new footman, a young nobleman will appear in his place and make love to me! Did you ever hear of such a piece of bare-faced impudence?

Laura. Bare-faced is no word for it, but—

Syb. Well! perhaps not, as it is to come masked in this way. But did you ever hear of anything so presumptuous?

Rose. It's shockingly presumptuous, but—

Syb. (*impatiently*) What do you mean by "but," both of you?

Rose. Well, *I* mean—But it will be such awful fun!

Syb. (*relaxing a little*) Perhaps it will be fun!

Laura. And *I* mean—But it's so romantic!

Syb. Perhaps it is romantic.

Rose. It's delightfully romantic. It's like Feramorz and Lalla Rookh. The obscure minstrel is monarch of Bokhara.

Laura. Or like Fitz James and Ellen Douglas. "And Snowdon's knight is Scotland's king."

Rose. Or like "young Lochinvar, who came—

Syb. "Out of the West." Yes, no doubt! but if you remember, he came as a horseman and not as a footman. But supposing it is all this, what are we to do with him?

Laura. Read the letter again, Sybil, will you? and let us think.

Syb. (*reads*) "A true friend—it's of no consequence who—gives you notice that instead of the new footman whom you expect to-morrow"—(that is to-day, you know)—"a certain young nobleman will appear in his place and make love to you in this disguise. Be warned; be wary; be wise." There's a nice letter for a girl to receive who is not yet out—and her parents not yet come home.

Rose. Whom can it be from?

Syb. I don't know. Doesn't it say that the writer is of no consequence?

Rose. Yes, but there are so few people who consider themselves of no consequence that I thought you might guess from that.

Laura. Do you know the handwriting?

Syb. Not the dot of an i of it.

Laura. Is it masculine or feminine?

Syb. Neuter, I think. But there's the letter. Look at it yourself. (*handing it to LAURA; ROSE joins her on ottoman, and they examine it*)

Rose. There's no saying whether it's a man's writing or a woman's.

Laura. It's a hand with no character at all, certainly.

Syb. Then it ought to be a woman's, according to Pope. But who wrote the letter doesn't matter. The question is, who is this interloping peer?

Rose. It's Lord Freddy Freelock, I know. He is an awfully forward boy. Oh! You may laugh, but he is the most presumptuous creature breathing.

Laura. Goodness, Rose! How do *you* know?

Syb. Don't question her authority, my dear. No doubt she had it from his own lips. But it can't be Lord Freddy. Why, he has known me ever since he was that high.

Laura. I think it's much more likely to be his brother Angus; he is just back from India.

Syb. Lord Angus! (*laughing, contemptuously*) My dear Laura, he is thirty if he's an hour. Let us draw the line somewhere, please.

Rose. It might be Lord Cuthbert Ogleton.

Syb. Gone in for science and lectures.

Laura. Or Lord Claude Morringer.

Syb. Joined the Salvation Army and preaches.

Rose. Mightn't it be Lord Thirlmere?

Syb. On board the Phlegethon with my cousin, Tommy Trefoil; and they're not home yet.

Rose. Then you must guess yourself, Sybil. I've no more court-cards in my hand. But whoever it is, I think it's the greatest fun in the world.

Syb. But what are we to do? Shall we run for it and take shelter in your house, or yours, till papa returns; or shall we stand our ground like the dauntless Three and face the proud invader?

Enter ROBERT, L., *hands SYBIL a letter, and exit.*

Rose. Face him, I say, and confound his presumption.

Laura. My dear Rose, don't use such dreadful language.

Rose. But I didn't mean— (*reproachfully*) Oh, Laura! (*appealingly*) Sybil, did I?

Syb. Oh, I don't know. What does it matter? Listen to this. I've got the clue to the mystery. It's from my cousin Tommy Trefoil. They've just got into Portsmouth. Ah, the dear boy! (*putting lips to ring on her finger*) He gave me this ring when he sailed last time.

Rose. Yes, but read, read, read!

Syb. Listen then. (*as if about to begin, then checks herself, and rather shyly*) No, I shan't read the first part.

Laura. (*demurely*) Very well, dear. "After compliments," as the Oriental letters run. Begin "after compliments."

Syb. (*reads*) "That poop Thirlmere, who is an awful swagger chap——"

Laura. (*utterly perplexed*) But, Syb! Mr. Trefoil's language is really—What in the world is a "swagger chap?"

Rose. Oh, Laura! How shamefully your education has been neglected.

Syb. Yes, you've been brought up too much amongst girls evidently.

Rose. "A swagger chap!" Why a conceited, presumptuous person of course.

Syb. Of course; it's plain enough. (*reads*) "Who is an awful swagger chap, got raw at my talking so much about you"—the dear boy!—"and at last bet a fellow on board a monkey——"

Laura. A fellow on a monkey! (*looking for an explanation to Rose*)

Rose. I am afraid *my* education scarcely goes far enough for that.

Syb. (*after thought*) I think a monkey must be some sort of ship.

Rose. I dare say. If there are *men o' war*, why not——

Syb. Yes, of course; but at any rate it is plain enough that Lord Thirlmere has made a bet with some one, (*reads*)—"bet a fellow on board a monkey that he would make your acquaintance directly he got ashore, and that you would give him a ring from your own finger before he had been in your company half-an-hour."

Rose. } Oh!

Laura. }

Syb. Yes, I should think so. I should think it was Oh! (*reads*) "Of course," the dear boy goes on, "of course I mean to put a bullet into his gizzard for this——" (*a faint scream from LAURA*) Eh! What's the matter?

Laura. (*feebly*) Gizzard!

Syb. Oh! he only means any vital part. (*reads*)—"for this; but I thought I would let him come a real howler first——" (*a start*)

from LAURA)—fail utterly; that's all he means—"for you will sit on him, I know, in style—" Won't I!—"and so keep your weather eye open and be prepared for his coming at any moment, there's a precious darl—" I shan't read the end part; it's nothing.

Laura. Or only a soft one. But what do you mean to do about this presumptuous man?

Syb. If we could only manage—, What do you say? Couldn't we scheme so as to pass the half-hour in his company without his knowing who we are? Then the bet will be lost before he has begun to try to win it. Don't you see?

Laura. Yes, but how?

Syb. I think I know. Listen! Why should he play all the trick and we nothing? It's always the men that have the fun. Let us have our share for once. If he is going to put on a livery and play the man-servant, let us dress up too and pretend to be the maid-servants.

Rose. Oh! Syb! What a splendid notion!

Syb. Isn't it? What do you say, Laura?

Laura. Well, my dear Sybil, isn't it a little—don't you think it's rather a—(*quickly*)—I'll be the cook.

Rose. And I'll be the housemaid.

Syb. And I'll be the lady's maid. So that is settled. (*rings*) We must take Spiggott, our old butler, into the plot, and he must manage everything for us. I am afraid he will be rather shocked at our boldness, but it will be great fun to see him. And—oh! yes: that will be the way! We will call this the housekeeper's room and make it the field of action. It was the old school-room, you know, and so the very place for giving my lord a lesson.

Enter SPIGGOTT, L.

Oh! Spiggott, you are expecting a new footman to-day, aren't you?

Spig. Yes, Miss Sybil, Alfred 'Opkins; that's his name. Would you wish him called 'Opkins, miss, or Alfred? Pussonally I should prefer to call him 'Opkins, Alfred being my own name and rather too fine for a hunder servant.

Syb. Very well. But, Spiggott, I'm afraid there's something wrong.

Spig. (*starting*) Something wrong? Not a burglary, miss?

Syb. A burglary! What do you mean?

Spig. Well, miss, I don't want to alarm you, but Squire Surbiton's house was entered last night and every atom of silver carried off, from the great race-cup on the sideboard down to half a three-penny bit that the kitchen maid wore as a love token. You cannot fancy a cleaner sweep, miss. The house is full of visitors and not a fork to be had this day for love or money. Eye witnesses

tell me as it was a sight to draw tears from a stone to see all them gentlefolks sittin' at breakfast as polite and proper as ever, but eating with their knives like vultures.

Syb. I wish you would keep your burglaries to yourself, Spiggott, and not frighten us with them. Not that I am much frightened, for if they robbed Mr. Surbiton's house last night they will leave the neighborhood probably as fast as they can. Now, attend. I have had a letter telling me that this man Hopkins has been gained over by some impudent person who wants to—who has some curiosity about—well! about me.

Spig. About you, Miss Sybil! Oh! *(very slyly)*

Syb. And we are given to understand that this person is Lord Thirlmere.

Spig. Lord Thirlmere! The sailor, miss! Well! and it would be his lordship all over. I never saw him, but I've heard he's up to all manner of games, and particular fond of amatory theatricals.

Syb. Ah! The present seems certainly a case in point. But, Spiggott, we think he deserves a lesson for such impudence, and we mean to give him one, and in this way. We mean to play the maid-servants to his footman.

Spig. To his footman! Is he bringing his man with him then?

Syb. No, no. How dull you are, Spiggott! I'll explain it to you. Come here! *(she and SPIGGOTT draw aside)*

Rose. Laura, look here! What do housemaids do?

(they rise and come forward)

Laura. Do! I don't know. Dust, don't they?—and wear charming little caps.

Rose. Yes, I know. That's why I said I'd be the housemaid. And they have the daintiest little aprons, don't you know, and—let me see—bare arms?

Laura. No, no; only cooks have bare arms. That's why I said I'd be the cook. Of course—hem!—of course if his lordship should be more attracted by the cook or the housemaid than by the lady's maid, it would—

Rose. It would be all the better. It would draw off his attention from Syb and make the loss of the bet more certain.

Laura. Just so. I think we ought to try to—

Rose. To fetch him! Of course. My trust is in my cap, which I shall set at him, you may be sure. I'm dying to begin.

Laura. So am I. My soul's in arms—bare arms—and eager for the fray!

Syb. *(coming forward)* It's no use remonstrating, Spiggott; you know what you've got to do. *(to the girls)* Come along. Let us go and dress.

Rose. Oh, yes. *(then drawing SYBIL a little aside)* Look here, Sybil. Tell me. What do housemaids say?

Syb. (*thoughtfully*) Say! Oh, they say (*imitating*) "My patience! La! there now! Well, my goodness gracious me! Did you ever!" Don't you know?

Rose. Oh, yes; I know. Thanks! (*runs off, L.*)

Syb. Come, Laura. Remember what I've told you, Spiggott.

Laura. Sybil, just one second. Tell me, what do cooks say? Characteristic, don't you know?

Syb. (*thoughtfully*) Say! (*confidently*) "Drat it!" They always say "Drat it!" That must be your strong suit. When in doubt say "Drat it!" Come along. Summon your wits now, Spiggott, and be careful. (*Exeunt SYBIL and LAURA, L.*)

Spig. My wits! I shall need them with one of the noblemen of the country coming to make love to Miss Sybil in a footman's livery! Goodness preserve us! Summon my wits! I've wits enough for the ordinary transactions of life without no summonsing; but really when we come to county-courting of this sort—I don't know whether I ought to let this go on. The master's away, and—but it's useless talking like that. Nobody ever contradicts Miss Sybil. She's the queen here, and she can't do no wrong. That's the constitootional rule in this family; and if she was to set the house on fire, or upset the tea urn, or marry the curate, or what not, it would be somebody else's fault and not Miss Sybil's. Well, then, let me see. What am I to do? This lord in livery, he's to have the bachelor's room next the billiard room, and he's to suppose this is the servants' hall, and I am to forget he's a lord and act according, and I am to treat him like a servant, and I am to call him 'Opkins, and—and I'm to summon my wits, and—Oh! I shall make some blessed blunder or another, that's quite certain.

Enter, R., ROBERT, *with HOPKINS, who carries a carpet bag.*

Rob. That's Mr. Spiggott.

Spig. Oh! (*aside*) Now for it. (*aloud, with importance*) Is it—hem!—'Opkins?

Hop. Yes, my name's Alfred Hopkins. Am I speaking to the butler?

Spig. Yes, my l—hem! (*aside*) There I go! (*aloud*) You can go, Robert. (*exit ROBERT*) Yes, 'Opkins, yes. You're come to occupy the second footman's situation, 'Opkins?

Hop. Sir George Amberly engaged me at his club, the Army and Navy, where I was footman—

Spig. Jes' so, 'Opkins, jes' so. (*aside*) He's got his story all pat any way. (*aloud*) I'm aware of the circumstances. I hope we may be good friends. Beg pardon, my—won't you—I mean take a chair, 'Opkins, take a chair.

Hop. Oh! thank you, I'd as lief stand for a bit. I've been sitting in the train for a couple of hours, and I——

Spig. (*hastily*) Dear me! yes. You'll take a glass of sherry after your journey, my lord?

Hop. (*staring at him*) Well, as you're so kind, *my lord*, I think I will. (*aside*) This is a queer old cove.

Spig. (*aside*) There I go, I knew I should. (*aloud*) Ha! ha! you mustn't mind my little jokes, 'Opkins. I'm said to have a pleasant humour.

Hop. Don't apologise, pray. If it shows itself in standing glasses of sherry, its one of the pleasantest humours I ever came across.

Spig. You're very good, my l——hem! A little angostura in the sherry, 'Opkins?

Hop. No, none of your bitters. Neat for me.

Spig. Very good, my——hem! (*sets chair by HOPKINS, bends butler-wise, and exit, L.*)

Hop. Well, I'm blessed! Won't you take a chair? And won't you have some sherry? And will you have some bitters? If I'd only known that that was the way they treated servants in country houses, I'd have cut the old Rag long since. Stop slaving there, where the butler never speaks to you except to blow you up, when I might have come to a place like this, where a hospitable old gent like him receives you, and welcomes you and treats you like a lord! Oh! I've been wasting my time, I have. But everything shows it must be known as a good place this, for if a fellow didn't try to buy it of me in the train! Looked like a gentleman, too; a young navy gentleman; one of those happy-go-lucky chaps as don't seem to care whether it's to-day or to-morrow. Some fellow that had run through his money, I suppose: though I'm blessed if he didn't offer me a tenner for the place. Glad I didn't take it, anyhow. If the maids are only as friendly as the butler, service here must be a sort of pleasant lounge livened up with nips of sherry. (*re-enter SPIGGOTT, L., with wine*) Ah! here he comes. Looks as if he'd been having a taste himself. He has a "nippin' and an eager air," as the man says in the play.

Spig. (*aside*) Now I must be more careful. (*aloud*) You'd better be getting into your livery at once, 'Opkins. I suppose you know your duties pretty well; but there's—there's idiosyncrasies in every family, and them I must put you up to. (*then in a low confidential tone of a butler to an honoured guest*) I think you'll find that sherry to your taste, my l——hem!—to your taste. Manzanilla of a very superior class. (*fills glass*)

Hop. (*taking it*) Here's your health, sir. (*drinks*)

Spig. (*bows deferentially*) I've an Amontillado that I should like your lordsh——hem!—that I should like your opinion of, 'Opkins, some time or another.

Hop. You've only to say when, old man. Any time will suit me. This is most particular good. Now what might that wine stand the governor in, do you suppose, old Bow-winder, eh? (*tapping him on the waistcoat*)

Spig. (*laughing respectfully*) Ha! ha! your l—hem!—No jokes about my white waistcoat, 'Opkins, pray. It's a tender point. But as to the price, my l—hem!—eighty-four. We've only nine dozen of it, and I wish we had more.

Hop. So do I. Eighty-four! Well, it's better than our Manzanilla at the Rag anyway.

Spig. Is it though, really, my l—hem!—is it indeed?

Hop. It's difficult to judge, perhaps, by remnants, ha! ha! but I should say, making every allowance, this was the better tippie of the two. (*as SPIGGOTT offers to refill his glass*) No, no. Take it away. No more. This is my first day, and I must be on my good behaviour. Thank you, Mr. Spiggott, thank you, sir.

Spig. (*bowing*) 'Servant, my lor'—that is—quite welcome, 'Opkins. Come, now, I'll show you your room if you like. This way. By-the-bye, hot water or cold in your bath to-morrow morning, my l—hem!

Hop. (*after staring at him*) None of your gammon now. I never come across such a facetious old file since I was born. Come show us where the room is, and let me get into my uniform. (*picking up carpet bag*)

Spig. (*trying to take it from him*) Oh, allow me, my l—, hem! (*enter LAURA in cook's dress, L.*) Stop! stay! 'Opkins. You must be introduced to the ladies. Mrs.— Mrs.—

Laura. (*aside to him*) Flummery.

Spig. Mrs. Flummery, this is 'Opkins, our new second footman. 'Opkins, Mrs. Flummery, our cook. (*aside*) There! they can manage it for themselves a bit now.

Laura. Oh! You're the new footman, eh! I hope I see you well, young man.

Hop. The same to you, ma'am, I'm sure. Very 'appy to make your acquaintance. Shake hands. It's pleasant after the pale complexions of our London ladies to see such a bit of colour as you are, ma'am. And how do you like the country, ma'am?

Laura. Oh! I was born in the country, so of course I like it. Do you know this part?

Hop. Never set eyes on it before; but it must be a lovely place, judging by the natives, ma'am.

Laura. (*aside*) He's dreadfully complimentary. (*aloud*) Natives are three-and-six a-dozen—drat it!

Hop. So they are, worse luck! But I referred to the local ladies, ma'am, and not to heyesters. They don't buy such as you by the dozen, I guess, do they?

Laura. Oh! have done with your compliments, Mr. Hopkins.

What creatures you London gentlemen are to flatter to be sure ! But we don't believe you.

Enter ROSE in housemaid's dress, L.

Rose. Believe 'em ! What, men ! No, we're not so simple down here.

Spig. 'Opkins, this is Miss—— Miss——

Laura. Miss Flynn, our housemaid. Mary, this is Mr. Hopkins from London ; our new footman.

Rose. Oh ! my patience ! What was I a-saying ? and before a stranger, too ! Well ! la ! there now !

Hop. You've said nothing as can be used against you, Miss Mary. Very 'appy to know you, miss. Hope to be able to teach you to believe young men in time.

Rose. In how many lessons, Mr. Hopkins, and what do you charge ?

Hop. The number depends, but as for charge, I'll do it for love.

Rose. I'm afraid that's more than I can afford. (*he gives her a chuck under the chin*) Now, do a' done ! What do you mean ? La ! There now ! (*aside*) He's dreadfully impudent, but he does it splendidly.

Enter SYBIL as lady's maid, L.

Spig. 'Opkins, this is Miss—— Miss——

Laura. Miss Thompson, my young lady's maid. Nelly, this is our new footman, Mr. Hopkins, from London.

Hop. Charmed, miss, raily charmed to make your acquaintance. Well ! They talk about sights for sore eyes——

Syb. Have you sore eyes, Mr. Hopkins ? Think o' that now. Cook, what's good for sore eyes ?

Hop. Why *you* are, Miss Nelly. What the doctors call a pacific for 'em, you are, ha ! ha ! But I merely used a familiar phrase to express that you were uncommon good to look at, miss.

Syb. (*shrinking a little*) Don't you think the familiar phrase was a little too familiar for so short an acquaintance ? (*then more boldly*) What do you say, cook ? Ought people to talk about people's faces before they've known people two minutes, till people don't know what to do with their faces they're so ashamed ?

Laura. Oh ! drat them ! It's their London manners. They think they can say what they like to us country folks.

Rose. Yes ; I daresay he thinks we make hay and feed the pigs and all that.

Syb. And he is calling us " Chawbacons " in his heart all the time probably.

Hop. Oh ! come now. I pertest. No, no ! Raily now ! you mis-

constroo me. But naturally you ain't accustomed to compliments of such a metropolitan horder down here. There! let's change the subject. Come, Miss Nelly, give us a notion how the land lies. What sort of a place is this? Tol-lol?

Syb. Oh! very tolerable, we think. (*the others retire up*)

Hop. Ah! so I should have supposed. The grub pretty good?

Syb. The—the—?

Hop. The grub—the livin'—the servants' table?

Syb. (*hastily*) Oh! yes; I've never heard a complaint. I mean we are quite satisfied—quite—

Hop. I understand. That's all right. The governor a good sort?

Syb. The governor?

Hop. Well! I mean old Amberly: Sir George: the master, then.

Syb. Oh!—oh, yes; very.

Hop. That's right again. And the old woman?

Syb. (*shocked*) The old—Do you mean mamma?

(*then perceives her blunder*)

Hop. (*laughing*) Mamma! (*nudging her in the ribs with one finger. She gives a little shriek of indignation*) Ha! ha! You're a rare 'un. Yes, ma, of course, if that's your name for her. What is she like?

Syb. Oh, very nice.

Hop. That's your sort. And Miss?

Syb. Who?

Hop. The young lady, Miss Amberly? Is she the right kind of thing?

Syb. (*embarrassed but amused*) Oh! I don't know.

Hop. I heard she was rather pretty. Is she?

Syb. Oh! I don't know.

Hop. Don't you? (*aside*) These girls never will speak well of each other's looks. (*aloud*) Don't you, indeed! I'd lay odds on one thing. Would you like to know what that is?

Syb. Of course I should.

Hop. She can't hold a candle to her maid.

Syb. Of course not. I hold her candles for her.

Hop. No, but I mean she's not half as pretty as—you, you know.

Syb. (*much amused*) Oh yes, she is.

Hop. What, quite?

Syb. (*laughing*) Yes, quite.

Hop. Every bit?

Syb. Yes, every bit.

Hop. Pooh! That's your modesty. You'll say she's prettier next.

Syb. Oh, no I shan't.

Hop. Yes, you will.

Syb. No, I shan't.

Hop. Yes, you will.

Syb. No! I shan't.

(He tries to catch hold of her; she jumps out of his reach with "Get along with you, do!" and joins the others)

Laura. What's the matter? Drat it! What's the matter?

Rose. My patience! Whatever is it? La! There now.

Spig. Hallo! hallo! 'Opkins, 'Opkins! You come along o' me and get your livery on. Horder in the servants' hall. This way, this way. *(leading him to the door R.)* Oh! After you, my l—hem!

Exeunt, SPIGGOTT trying to take bag as they pass out. As soon as the girls are left alone, they drop into seats and burst out laughing.

Syb. Isn't it fun?

Rose. I declare there's nothing like acting.

Laura. And real acting like this.

All Three. How well he did it!

Syb. Didn't he? But how plainly you could see the gentleman through it all.

Laura. *(impressively)* You could see the nobleman.

"You may break, you may shatter the vase, if you will,
But the scent of the roses will hang round it still."

Rose. Yes, there was all York and Lancaster about him in spite of his disguise.

Syb. *(pensively)* Don't you think he is rather handsome? *(sighs)*

Laura. Yes; and what an aristocratic beauty. *(sighs)*

Rose. And such lovely legs. *(sighs)*

Syb. I wouldn't have believed he could do it so well. There was no break in it, you see. He kept it up throughout so splendidly.

Laura. Every now and then there was, perhaps, a word or an expression a little too refined, but——

Rose. But he made it sound so beautifully vulgar.

Syb. Yes, that was the great merit of the whole representation. It was astonishingly vulgar; but through it all you could detect——

Laura. The golden thread of nobility upon which these vulgar beads were strung.

Rose. Yes. If you can fancy an Æolian harp playing "Yankee Doodle."

Laura. *(laughing)* Rose! What nonsense! Who could fancy that?

Syb. Why not? If an American storm were panting on the strings. (*they laugh; re-enter SPIGGOTT in great disorder, R.*) What in the world's the matter?

Spig. Oh! miss! oh! Miss Sybil! (*breathless*)

Syb. Well! What is it?

Spig. Oh! miss!

Syb. (*impatiently*) Well? well?

Spig. Oh! miss! He's—he's himself!

Syb. You're *not* yourself, I think. What do you mean?

Spig. He isn't anybody else!

Syb. (*stamping her foot*) What!

Spig. He's real; he's real!

All Three. (*in consternation*) Who?

Spig. (*in a tragic tone, and pointing off*) 'Opkins!!!

Syb. What! That man? The real footman you expected?

Spig. Yes, miss.

Syb. (*thunderstruck*) You must be mistaken.

Spig. No, miss, he's 'Opkins, the footman, as sure as fate and taxes.

Laura. But—(*rising in horror*) Gracious powers! then I've shaken hands with a menial!

Rose. Mercy on me! I've been—chin-chucked by a lackey!

Syb. Horrors on horrors' head! I've been nudged in the ribs by my own footman! (*they all fall back into seats*) But—(*springing up*) This is too horrible, too awful! Spiggott, you must be mistaken—you shall be mistaken. How do you know?

Spig. He told me himself, miss; told me that a gent tried to bribe him to be let come here instead of him, and 'Opkins wouldn't. But, miss—oh, lor!—but, Miss Sybil, 'Opkins thinks that this gent wasn't a lover at all, but—

Rose. Not a lover?

Spig. No, miss, but a—

Syb. Not Lord Thirlmere?

Spig. No, miss, but a—

Rose. Not a suitor at all?

Spig. No, miss, but a—

Laura. Not even a fortune-hunter coming after her gold?

Spig. No, miss, merely a burglar coming after the silver.

All Three. A burglar!

Spig. Yes, a burglar! A blood-thirsty outlaw with crape on his face, and—oh! (*almost dancing with terror*) we shall all be murdered in our beds as sure as guns. I know we shall. I shall be cut off in my prime like a lily of the valley—ugh!

They all start violently as HOPKINS re-enters, R., in livery, but with his coat off.

Hop. (*aside*) Blest if they haven't given me a bedroom fit for a

lord. (*aloud*) Now, which o' you young ladies will do a charitable office for a nice young man? Here's a button off my wristband, and I'm a very poor 'and at needle and thread. Don't all speak together now. Cook, you're a kind-hearted one, I know. Put this on for me, will you? Here, catch hold! (*going to her*)

Laura. Back, menial! (*Exit, like a queen of tragedy, L.*)

Hop. Highty-tighty! What's come to the cook? Is the kitchen chimney a-fire, or anything gone wrong with the boiler? Oh, I see; hinfra dig for her to do any sewing, I suppose. Here, Miss Mary, you'll do it for me, I know. (*going to her*)

Rose. Don't speak to me, man! (*Exit, tossing her head, L.*)

Hop. (*silent with astonishment for a moment, then thinking he sees it*) Jealous, by the powers! Jealous of you, Miss Nelly. They saw I liked you best, and— (*she passes him to go out*) Here! Stop a second, my dear, and put this button on for me. (*catching her hand to detain her; she turns calmly and gives him a magnificent stare of contempt; he drops her hand aghast, and she walks off, L., very stately*) Well, you might twist me like a dinner-napkin; you might floor me with a feather brush. What's come to 'em all? Explain, Mr. Spiggott, will you? What have I done to 'em? Give it a name, old Bow-winder, will you?

Spig. What do you mean, feller? How dare you address me in them terms? I'd have you recollect you're a hunder servant and not adopt them familiarities with your superiors. (*moving towards the door, L.*) Bow-winder, indeed! (*stopping and turning*) Finish dressing of yourself at once, sir, and get to your work, and don't stand idlin' there. (*moving towards door*) Bow-winder, indeed! (*stopping and turning*) Know your place, feller; know your place. (*proceeding to door*) Bow-winder, eh! (*Exit pompously, R.*)

Hop. (*staring after him in astonishment*) Have I got into a lunatic asylum by accident? Or have I walked promiscuous into a Christmas pantomime, and is this the transformation scene? What does it mean? First they come cooin' about me like the first breath of spring, and then they turn as cold and cuttin' as a March wind. First they're all smilin' and noddin' and turnin' me full on like drawing-room gas, and then they turn round and snuff me out like a kitchen candle. I won't stop in a place like this, you know. My intellect couldn't stand it. My mind would give way under—What's that?

The French window C. opens and LORD THIRLMERE looks in.

Thirl. (*in a loud whisper*) Shipmate, ahoy! Are you all alone there?

Hop. Who is it? Why if it ain't the very gentleman who wanted to buy my place of me in the train.

Thirl. Can't you answer a hail? Are you alone, I say? Is there anyone there besides yourself?

Hop. No. I'm the only person here—besides myself.

Thirl. (*entering*) Come on board, sir. (*going to HOPKINS*) Well, mate! How do you get on? Beginning to feel at home, eh?

Hop. No. I'm continuin' to feel all abroad.

Thirl. Gad! You look so: look as if you didn't know which way her head was.

Hop. Yes, I do. I know it was tossed in that way. (*action*)

Thirl. What do you mean? Don't you like your situation?

Hop. Not at all.

Thirl. Aren't the people nice then?

Hop. No; they're uncommonly nasty.

Thirl. Are they though? Snub the new-comer, do they?

Hop. Snub is no word for it. Bless your life, sir, if they was all mornin' stars and I was mere dirt; if they was birds of Paradise, and I was a toad under a stone, they couldn't be more—Why look at me, sir. Do *you* see anything of the toad in me?

Thirl. No, by Jove! You look more like a warm-blooded animal than a cold at present.

Hop. Why there! And is there anything like dirt about me to your eye?

Thirl. Eh! Hands might be cleaner, perhaps.

Hop. 'Shaw, sir! I spoke figurative.

Thirl. Oh! I see. No, of course not; of course not. But look here, then. Think again over the offer I made to you this morning. Will you sell your place now? Come, I've got a game on. Sell me your place for half-an-hour at any rate. A tanner for half-an-hour. Come! Will you?

Hop. Perhaps I would if I knew what you wanted to buy it for.

Thirl. Bah! What does that matter to you?

Hop. Ah! But it does matter to me. There's a etiquette in our profession that won't allow us to hand over our employers to we don't know who.

Thirl. Ah! well, you're a good chap, and I respect your scruples. I don't want to do these folks any harm, bless you! But, as I tell you, I've got a game on—a bet.

Hop. Yes, but—

Thirl. Well, easy all then, and I'll tell you the whole business. I'm Lord Thirlmere, and—

Hop. Lord Thirlmere! Beg pardon, my lord, a thousand times for not giving your lordship your proper title.

Thirl. Oh! belay all that. What do I care about the title? Stow all ceremony. I'm skylarking ashore. This is how it is. I've made a bet with a messmate, Trefoil of the Phlegethon, that I'll cut him out with this Miss Amberly, and to prove it I am to make her give me a ring from her own finger. Understand? If I can show the ring I win the wager. See?

Hop. I see; but surely, my lord, it's rather a risky bet to have made. How much have you put on it, if it's not an impertinence?

Thirl. A monkey.

Hop. Dear me! Rather a large stake, ain't it, my lord, for such a desperate venture? May I ask how your lordship means to work it?

Thirl. Oh, I don't know. Some way will turn up, ten to one. The first thing was to get into her company, and as I suspect that young swab, Tommy, has written to warn her, the only thing was a disguise. Will you deal?

Hop. But the servants! They've seen me, my lord. They'll notice the difference. I don't know, though. I've got to put on this coat and powder my hair. They might—— But then there is the livery. Mine won't fit your lordship.

Thirl. The livery! I've got it on—under these. Oh! I look to the rigging before I go on a cutting-out expedition; trust me for that. All I've got to do is to whip off these things, powder my hair and ——me voilà!

Hop. Well, if your lordship will risk it——

Thirl. Risk it! I'd risk anything for a lark. (SPIGGOTT'S voice outside, "'Opkins'")

Hop. Come along, then. Quick, my lord. There's the butler coming. This way!

Exeunt, R.; SPIGGOTT, outside, "'Opkins." SPIGGOTT enters, L.

Spig. What's that idle rascal doin'? Does it take him all this time to put his livery on and sprinkle a little flour on his hair? (calls) 'Opkins! He doesn't look to me an active man at all. (calls) 'Opkins! Do you hear?

Enter ROBERT, R.

Rob. Did you want me, sir?

Spig. No, I want the new man. What's he doing? The dinner table ought to be laid. I want to see how he does his work; though he ought to know all about it, coming, as he does, from a fust-rate London club, where they teach 'em to wait if they do anywhere. (calls) 'Opkins!

Rob. (innocently) It looks as if he was teaching you to wait, sir, now; don't it?

Spig. How dare you venture upon jokes with me, sir? You forget your buttons, sir. You'll come to a bad end if you go joking with your superiors like that. Don't stand staring at me. Go to the new man's room and tell him to come instantly—hinstantly.

Rob. Which of them am I to tell, sir?

Spig. (startled) Eh!

Rob. Which of the two, sir?

Spig. (with a pause of horror) Two!

Rob. I saw two men go into the end room in the gallery, sir.

Spig. (*after staring at ROBERT in inarticulate horror*) Oh, the house is infested with burglars. 'Opkins himself—I've felt it all along—'Opkins is a burglar. And now here's another! And how many more to follow—who knows? Oh, dear! Oh, dear! This is too awful! Robert—was you ever murdered in your bed?

Rob. No, sir; don't think so, sir.

Spig. Ah, it's probable you'll shortly have the opportunity. (*starting and looking round*) There's burglars in the house—heaps of 'em. Oh, my conscience! (*wiping his forehead*) Whatever will become of us all, I don't know. (*then noticing that ROBERT is staring at him in astonishment*) Don't you go for to suppose, Robert, that the starts and jerks to which I am at present subject are owing to fear.

Rob. Very well, sir.

Spig. I don't know what fear is, Robert.

Rob. No, sir.

Spig. So don't you go and suppose they're fear.

Rob. No, sir. (*innocently*) What are they then, sir?

Spig. Eh? What are they? Oh! the—hem!—the responsibilities of my high position, I suppose, giving vent to a sort of a—of a—a sort of a reflex action o' some sort. I can't explain it no further—not so as *you* can understand it. But fear is quite a different thing; it's a—

Rob. I thought you said you didn't know what it was, sir.

Spig. Not physic'ly you little fool. Intellectchally, of course I can explain it. It's a disturbance of the mind caused by—Bless us all! What's that? (*running behind ROBERT as SYBIL enters, followed by ROSE and LAURA, both much frightened, L.*)

Syb. Spiggott (*ROBERT retires to back of scene*) that new footman must be sent away. (*SPIGGOTT groans*) I really could not face him again after to-day's mistake. Pay him his month's wages and send him back. I'll explain it to papa. And, Spiggott, something should be done about the other suspicious person who—

Spig. Do you mean the burglar, miss?

Syb. I mean the man whom Hopkins suspected at any rate. He should be prevented coming.

Spig. You needn't give yourself no trouble to prevent *his* coming, miss.

Syb. Why not?

Spig. Because he's come, miss; the burglar's come.

Rose and Laura. Come!!

Syb. What do you mean?

Spig. I mean that he's arrived safe; that he's in the house, Miss Sybil; that he's a-doing of his hair and cleaning himself probably. Oh, miss, miss! he's in the house, I say, closeted with 'Opkins. They're arranging the last details of the burglary. They're both

in the swim, miss; both members of the same gang. They're only waiting for midnight, and then—oh! my grey hairs.

Rose. Oh, Sybil!

Laura. What *are* we to do?

Syb. Something must be done, Spiggott. Couldn't you run down to the village and give notice to the police?

Spig. I, miss! I run! I'm afraid I'm not equal to running. (*aside*) Not such a risk as that anyway. (*aloud*) When I was your age, Miss Sybil, I was a perfect ostrich at running, but there's nothing of the ostrich about me now.

Syb. Except the white feather. What are we to do then? Some one must go.

Spig. Send Robert, miss.

Syb. What, that child! You'd send that little boy on a duty you daren't undertake yourself?

Spig. Don't say "daren't," miss. It's not a question of daring. It's a question of who can go the fastest. Robert's a very swift lad.

Syb. But he will be afraid to go, poor boy!

Spig. Not he, miss. Robert's a very bold boy. (*beckoning him*) Robert, we want you to run down to the village with a message.

Rob. Yes, sir.

Syb. Shall you mind going in the dark?

Rob. No, miss.

Spig. It's a message to the police. They're to come up at once. There's robbers about.

Rob. Yes, sir.

Syb. You shan't go if you are afraid, Robert.

Rob. Ain't at all afraid, miss.

Laura. You're not at all afraid of the robbers?

Rob. No, miss.

Rose. But suppose you were to meet them?

Rob. I daresay that would frighten them, miss.

Rose. What, meeting a child like you?

Rob. They say when you're breaking the law a child in arms would fright you, miss.

Syb. You're a very brave boy, Robert, and you shall go.

Laura. You're a perfect Bayard in buttons and I admire you.

Rose. You are a dear, brave boy, and when you come back I will give you a present.

Rob. Thank you, miss. Shall I go at once, sir?

Spig. Yes, and be as quick as you can. (*Exit ROBERT, R.*)

Laura. Well! it's consoling to see some courage somewhere.

Rose. Yes; it's not mere volume that makes a man after all.

Syb. Volume! No. There may be more heart, it seems, in one little page of the smallest type than in a whole Butler's Analogy.

Spig. (*aside; uneasily*) They're not in the best taste, these

hinnywendoes. (*aloud*) But what are we to do about the men till the police come to lock them up, miss?

Laura. (*almost crying*) I wish somebody would lock me up!

Rose. Yes, let us go and lock ourselves up somewhere.

Syb. No, no, no, we must do nothing of the sort. If we let them suspect for a moment that they are discovered, we are lost. The only thing is to treat them exactly as if they were servants and keep them constantly employed. So we will have tea here, Spiggott, and as, I suppose, only one man will show, make him help you to bring it in.

Rose. Oh, Syb! I couldn't do it.

Laura. Nor I. I should scream!

Syb. We must do it. Come away for a moment and compose yourselves, and then—It's the only thing to do. Come along. When we come back you'll bring tea, Spiggott.

(*Exeunt SYBIL, ROSE, and LAURA, L.*)

Spig. Life, under its present aspect, is one long throat-cutting. I'm a doomed man; I feel it; and till the awful moment arrives, just exist by fits and starts, as you may say. How am I to act? How shall I treat him if the other comes instead of 'Opkins? 'Opkins! He isn't 'Opkins. Neither of 'em's 'Opkins. Oh! I take my solemn Davy (*wiping his brow*) this gets dreadfuller and dreadfuller the more you examine it. They're just two nameless 'orrors like First Robber and Second Robber in a play. I must pretend not to see they've been changed, I suppose; put it down to the livery—Oh! lor! (*starting, and turning away*)

Enter THIRLMERE, in livery, R.

Thirl. I think you wanted me, Mr.—Mr.—

Spig. (*not daring to look at him*) Spiggott, that is my name, 'Opkins. Alfred Spiggott. (*half to himself*) For many years butler to Sir George Amberly, who erects this stone in recognition of—him! (*aloud, still without looking at him*) You've been some time about your twollet, 'Opkins. I've been—been waiting.

Thirl. Sorry, sir; but it takes some time to change everything, you know.

Spig. (*trembling*) Naturally, naturally. (*aside*) It hasn't taken long to change his voice. It's second robber as sure as I'm a living man—I mean, as sure as I'm a dead 'un. (*aloud*) You've got your livery on then?

Thirl. Of course. Will you glance your eye over it? Does it fit pretty well?

Spig. It's sure to—(*aside*) if every honest man's clothes fit your thief, as they say. (*turning timidly and looking at him*) Second robber! I knew it!

Thirl. Well, it ought to fit. (*swinging round*) All right behind?

Spig. Couldn't be more so. Fits you admirably. I—should scarcely have known you again, 'Opkins.

Thirl. Shouldn't you, indeed! Ah! that's the powder. Powder alone quite changes a man.

Spig. True. (*aside*) But powder and bullets change him more. (*aloud*) Really, it's a most becoming dress. You look fit for the Queen's service, 'Opkins.

Thirl. Ay, ay, sir. So I am generally considered, I believe. Well, where's the family? Ain't I to see them?

Spig. (*recovering his dignity a little*) You'll see them all in good time, 'Opkins.

Thirl. Of course. Do you keep only one footman?

Spig. (*aside, with a start*) Here's the burglar coming out. (*aloud*) Our first footman is away for a short time.

Thirl. Ah! And the governor's from home too, isn't he?

Spig. (*after a gasp*) Just at present; just at present.

Thirl. Doesn't come back to-night, I suppose?

Spig. (*aside*) Oh! my gracious! (*aloud*) N—n—not for certain.

Thirl. (*hastily*) Why, is there any chance of it?

Spig. Nothing is certain but the unforeseen, 'Opkins! He *might* come.

Thirl. Oh! is that all? The cow *might* jump over the moon.

Spig. (*aside*) Yes, and some one might run away with the spoon, which is much more likely. (*enter SYBIL, ROSE and LAURA, L.*) 'Ush! The young ladies!

Syb. Tea, Spiggott. (*SPIGGOTT bows and nudges THIRLMERE, who is staring at the girls*) I am dying for some tea. Aren't you, Laura? You look so, I'm sure.

Spig. (*whispering to THIRLMERE*) Come along, sir.

Thirl. (*whispering*) But which is Miss Amberly?

Spig. The one in pink. Come, 'Opkins, pray!

Exeunt SPIGGOTT and THIRLMERE, L.

Rose. Sybil, I shall faint if I have to stay in the room with that man. It isn't the same man. Did you see?

Syb. I saw. And the situation is much too dangerous for fainting. There can no longer be any doubt that there are robbers in the house, and our position is most perilous.

Laura. Did you notice what an awful countenance he had?

Syb. Yes, it was horrid certainly.

Rose. He simply looked bludgeons and knuckle-dusters.

Syb. Yes, but we shall frighten ourselves to death if we talk in this way. Come, we must summon all our courage and act now for our lives. We must pretend not to notice him.

Rose. I might as well pretend not to notice an ague I had got.

Laura. And I tremble on the brink of hysterics every time he moves.

Syb. For all our sakes don't fall into them. If he thought you were laughing at him it would be all over with us. We must all make a great effort. I am just as frightened as you. If I could do as I liked, I should sit down and scream ceaselessly for two hours ; but if I did—(*the door opens*) Oh! Now then, nerve yourselves. (*they all start as THIRLMERE enters with tea-tray, etc., L., SPIGGOTT following with cake, etc.*) Talk now! talk! Say something. (*as if continuing some conversation*) Fancy his coming to ask me about it, as if I had anything to do with the disposal of livings. And besides, I know nothing about his qualifications as a clergyman, or whether his services are high or low, or broad or narrow, or what. (*aside to ROSE*) Do say something. (*aloud*) I only know that his services at tennis are very low. (*laughing*) Just over the net, don't you know? (*THIRLMERE offers his tray to her*) That table. (*indicating tea-table*)

Spig. (*in a butler's hushed voice*) Put it on that table, 'Opkins.

THIRLMERE goes and sets tray on the table ; ROSE and LAURA take the opportunity to sink back as if fainting when his back is turned, then pull themselves together again as he turns. SPIGGOTT hands THIRLMERE the dishes while he himself pushes table up to SYBIL.

Syb. (*while this is going on*) Well, I told him it was no good asking me, and moreover I gently hinted, you know, that it was no good anyway for I was sure that—Tea, Laura? (*LAURA gives a ghastly smile and an inclination of head, and takes the tea-cup with a trembling hand*)—for I was quite sure papa meant to offer it to—Rose, dear? (*same business during which SPIGGOTT is trying to make THIRLMERE hand cake to LAURA, which at last he does ; she takes a piece with a shudder ; the same with ROSE*)—Papa meant to offer it to Mr. Blatant, who has been curate there so long (*making her own tea and taking cake from THIRLMERE*), and I am sure quite deserves it. (*a ghostly chuckle from LAURA that threatens the beginning of a fit of hysterics*) Ah! now, Laura, it isn't fair. You shouldn't laugh at Mr. Blatant, for he is an excellent man, although perhaps his sermons are a little dull sometimes. Papa said a very witty thing about him. Did I tell you? Some lady said she didn't think sermons were Mr. Blatant's line, and papa said, "Oh, yes, they're his line for they are length without breadth," which is Euclid's definition of a line, don't you know? (*a hysterical sort of sob from LAURA*). Hark how Laura groans at the very name of Euclid. I believe she has never forgiven him for the bore he was at Miss Hickory's. Don't wait, Spiggott. (*SPIGGOTT with some difficulty draws THIRLMERE to door*) Well! I hated Euclid, too, with his eternal angles and circles and para-

chutes and rumboys and hypothenuisances and—(exeunt SPIGGOTT and THIRLMERE, L.) Ah! (*sinking back with a groan*) I couldn't have gone on a moment longer. And you neither of you helped me at all.

Laura. If I had uttered half a word the house would have rung with maniac laughter.

Rose. And it took me all my time to keep right end up. If I had breathed a syllable, I should have come down like a house of cards.

Syb. Well, I have exhausted all my powers. I feel as if half a minute more of such a strain would—(*the door, L., opens and THIRLMERE appears alone*)

Syb. (*pulls herself together by a magnificent effort*) Yes? (*in the indifferent tone of a lady to a servant*)

Thirl. (*aside*) That old lubber tells me to lay the table and won't say where the—(*aloud*) I beg pardon, miss, but I think the butler must be unwell. He is in the pantry in the possession of a trembling fit that it is very painful to witness. (*LAURA falls back on ottoman and begins to kick her heels hysterically*) So will you forgive my asking you—where is the plate? (*ROSE falls half over the arm of her chair fainting. SYBIL rises*)

Syb. Where's the—

Thirl. Where's the plate, miss—the silver?

Syb. (*after standing silent for a moment drops on her knees*) Take all we have, but spare, oh! spare our lives!

Thirl. (*astonished*) I beg your pardon, miss. What?

Syb. You shall know where the plate is and the jewels and everything, but oh! be content with that and don't kill us! (*hiding face in her hands*)

Thirl. Kill you! (*aside*) Takes me for a burglar as sure as I stand here. By Jove! the ring's my own! I knew I should find some way of tackling it. Mustn't frighten them too much, though. (*aloud and in the style of the gallant highwayman*) Don't be under the smallest apprehension for your safety, madam, or that of your friends. Believe me, the gentlemen of our calling look with as much distaste as do the public themselves upon the employment of violent measures in the way of our profession. We value peace as highly as anyone; and only ask, like other traders in this great commercial nation, to be allowed to carry on our business undisturbed and free from vexatious interference. (*most gently and politely*) You were mentioning the plate, madam.

Syb. (*in trembling accents*) The plate-closet is in the butler's room. He shall show you; he has the key.

Thirl. Thanks, madam, thanks. We will trouble him presently. Pray compose yourselves. Dear me! Surely that is a diamond of some value that I notice on the finger of our fair friend in the—the catalepsy. (*pointing to LAURA*) Do you think she would con-

sider me too encroaching if I venture to ask for a closer inspection of so rare a gem?

Laura. (*tearing off all her rings and holding them out*) Oh! here, sir, here!

Thirl. How can I express my obligations sufficiently? It is really a pleasure to do business with ladies so intelligent and— Ah! Am I wrong, or is that an old and very valuable family chain that I see round the neck of that very attractive young lady in the state of coma there? Do you think she could be persuaded to—

Rose. (*taking off watch and chain*) Oh! here, sir, here!

Thirl. You overwhelm me with favours. I protest I have not robbed three such charming creatures I don't know when. Now you won't think me trespassing too much on your kindness, madam, if I entreat with the utmost respect for a glance at your ladyship's watch and—and any little matters of decorative jewellery that at present owe their purest lustre to their proximity to your lovely person, madam. (*advancing a step*)

Syb. (*stripping off watch, chain and rings, and holding them out*) Oh! here, sir, here!

Thirl. Thanks, madam, thanks. I trust I—(*slipping ring on finger; aside*) Victory! How about that monkey, Tommy? What on earth am I to do with all these other blessed things, though? I shall be grabbed for a burglar, indeed, if I carry off this jeweller's shop with me. Let's see. Ah! stop! I know. (*aloud*) I am pained to perceive, madam, that you still look terrified and shocked. If there is anything I could do to bring back the rose to that fair cheek and the smile to those ruby lips—(*drawing slightly nearer SYBIL; she makes a movement of repulsion*) Ah! there! You won't trust me. You are still fearful of me. And yet I swear your grace and condescension have—nay, nay, no tears, I entreat. They put me to the torture, really. Ah, well, I never could resist salt water. Come, madam, you shall see that there is some romantic sentiment left even in these days. At whatever cost to myself, you shall believe that the gentlemen outlaws of the present age are capable of chivalrous generosity as well as the great masters of the past. Yes; may I perish else. Does your ladyship remember how Claude Duval once allowed a lady to ransom her property by dancing a Coranto with him on the open heath? Come, then; dance a minuet with me here and I will restore everything—everything; except some one small token, it matters little what, which I will receive as a gift from you in memory of our pleasant meeting.

Laura. Oh! pray do, Sybil.

Rose. Pray, pray, Sybil, do.

Syb. But the music! We cannot dance without music.

Laura. (*in a choking voice*) I will play.

Thirl. There, madam! You can't refuse now.

Syb. (*rising timidly*) I—I don't refuse, sir. I think it is very good of you and—

Thirl. "And say there is much kindness in the——" burglar. I am honoured, indeed. (*to LAURA*) Allow me, madam. (*handing her to piano*) Now! Minuet de la Cour and—off she goes!

(*dance*)

Thirl. (*bowing over her hand as the dance ends*) Thanks, madam, a thousand thanks! I restore everything and merely carry away with me the remembrance of your beauty, the soft pressure of your hand, and this little memento (*kissing ring on his finger*) of a happy hour. And so I wish your ladyship farewell. Ladies, your servant! (*to door, L.; then turning and in the merry sailor voice*) Any message for Tommy Trefoil?

Syb. (*staggered*) For whom?

Thirl. For Mr. Midshipman Trefoil, 'Majesty's ship, Phlegethon?

(*laughs, kisses his hand, and exit, L.*)

Syb. For Mr. Midshipman Trefoil! (*standing for a moment confused*) Ah! I see it all. My ring! my ring! Laura! Rose! Rouse up! My ring! Stop him! Stop him! (*ringing furiously*)

Laura. (*seizing one of SYBIL'S hands*) Oh! no, no, Sybil. Never mind the ring. Let him go or you will bring some of the others on us and we shall never have such a nice burglar again.

Rose. (*seizing the other hand*) Oh! yes, Sybil! Let him have the ring; he deserves it. You couldn't have been robbed nicer.

Syb. (*struggling to free her hands*) Burglar! Robbed! Good gracious! Don't you see? Stop him! Stop him! Don't you see? This was Lord Thirlmere! (*ringing again*) Under this disguise he has carried off my ring, poor Tommy's ring, and won his bet. Stop him! Spiggott! Oh, what a fool I was! What a fool—what a fool I was! Spiggott! Spiggott! (*enter SPIGGOTT, agitated, R.*) My ring, do you hear? My ring!

Spig. Yes, I heard, miss, and I'm answering it.

Syb. No, no! My ring that I was wearing. (*rings again*) He has carried it off! That man!

Spig. The burglar, miss?

Syb. What nonsense! The burglar! There's no burglar. That was Lord Thirlmere—Lord Thirlmere disguised in that livery. (*re-enter THIRLMERE*) Ah, you are here, Lord Thirlmere. How dare——

Thirl. Yes, I heard your cry of sorrow, and had not the heart to take from you a thing you valued. I return you your ring, trusting to your generosity to bear witness that it was given, as you may trust to my honour to confess the manner how. Would it be asking too much of your generosity to beg you to forgive the audacity of a sincere penitent? (*bowing low*)

Syb. (*aside to ROSE*) Isn't that nice of him? Isn't it sweet?

(*then with a little bow*) Well, sir, I will try to forgive, if—(*turning to the audience*) if you too can forgive

"MY LORD IN LIVERY."

CURTAIN.

NOTE.—*If there should be any difficulty about the dance after—*
"by dancing a Coranto with him on the open heath"—*read:*
Come, madam, treat me with a like condescension; suffer me but to press one kiss on that fair hand and I will restore everything—everything; except some one small token, it matters little what, which I will receive as a gift from you in memory of our pleasant meeting.

Laura. Oh! pray do, Sybil.

Rose. Pray, pray, Sybil, do. I would in a minute.

Thirl. There, madam, you can't refuse now.

Syb. (*holding out hand timidly*) I—I don't refuse, sir. I think it is very good of you, and—

Thirl. "And say there is much kindness in the—" burglar.
(*bowing over her hand and kissing it*) Thanks, madam; a thousand thanks!—*and continue as in text.*



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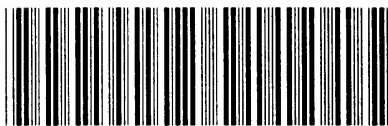
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